

**Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017 2017**

Present: Present: Cllr J Wescott (Chair), Cllr M Adams, Cllr P Reed, Cllr J Andrew (to 9.43pm), Cllr T Conway, Cllr J Briden, MDDC Cllr A Moore (from 9.35pm to 10.05pm), K Ward (Clerk) and 4 members of the public.

Meeting opened 8.00pm

**1718-45 Apologies**

Cllr J Hatton, Devon County Cllr P Colthorpe

**1718-46 Declaration of Interests**

Cllr Conway declared an interest in agenda item 14, but remained in the meeting and did not vote on the item.

**1718-47 Dispensations**

None

**1718-48 Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

The minutes were approved as a correct and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**1718-49 Open Forum**

It was reported that there have been unlicensed events going on in the vicinity with music playing all night. If anyone can identify the source please contact Bampton Town Council.

**1718-50 General Power of Competence**

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 the Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the General Power of Competence confirming that:

- At least two thirds of the Council (5 members) hold office as a result of being declared elected at the May 2015 elections
- The Clerk holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration.

**1718-51 Improvements to the centre of Morebath**

Cllr Conway presented a draft design for planting, pathway and other improvement works to the area next to the village hall (approx. 3.5m by 2m) with an estimated cost of £800. He has spoken to the Rothwell family and they have no objections. Cllr Andrew, while supporting the project, queried how the Council intended to implement the scheme and carry out long term maintenance without volunteers or a planting committee. It was suggested that as well as members of the Council volunteering time, the Council should invite other residents to volunteer. It was also suggested using community payback schemes for the initial work, such as digging, and whether the Council should pay for maintenance, say, twice per year. Cllr Andrew referred to the original proposed planting list which already identified slow growing and low maintenance planting which would be suitable for use on the site. It was agreed that planting should be carried out soon, otherwise it will need to be deferred until the Spring. Cllrs Andrew and Briden volunteered to assist with the planting.

It was noted that some residents had previously expressed that they did not want to see works carried out, but that there were complaints about the overgrown grass on the site.

Regarding the new noticeboard, various options for its location had been considered, and the most practical solution was to place it on the right-hand side of the bus shelter facing the road. There was a query as to whether planning permission would be required given the size of the notice board, or if Highways need to be consulted.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council should proceed with the project, up to a cost of £1000 (funded by locality grant and earmarked funds), subject to:

- Obtaining written consent from the Rothwell family
- Confirming whether planning and highways permission is needed for the noticeboard
- Advertising for volunteers to assist with the project.

**Actions:**

- Cllr Conway to contact the Rothwell family for written permission, check planning status of the noticeboard, confirm planting scheme and costings, and consider other volunteers / options for the project and long term maintenance
- Cllr Adams to contact Highways regarding the noticeboard

#### **1718-52 Salt bins**

Cllr Wescott referred to the adequacy and condition of the salt bins around the parish. Cllr Adams reported he has spoken to Highways and they will replace the poor condition bins next to the village hall and on Claypits. Other salt bins were in reasonable condition. It was agreed that the Council should request 3 additional salt bins at Bonny Cross, at the top of Blights Hill and Hukely Head. Cllr Andrew expressed concern that Blights Hill is not on the salting route, but noted this is outside of Council's control.

The storage and condition of the salt store in the car park were discussed, noting that there are two year's worth of salt but that some is deteriorating. It was agreed that the Council should get rid of some of the old salt and only store salt for one winter. It was noted that DCC will no longer supply salt for free so stocking up will be a cost to the Council. It was **RESOLVED** to have an open day for residents to collect old salt for their private use and to obtain an estimate for a permanent cover for the salt store in the car park.

**Actions:**

- Cllr Adams to contact Highways regarding additional salt bins.
- Cllr Conway to arrange an open day for salt collection by residents.
- Cllr Adams to investigate costs for a salt store cover.

#### **1718-53 Communications Working Group**

The Clerk read out an update from Cllr Hatton stating the topic is completed with the acquisition of the new noticeboard and website up to date. There is still the option of a regular piece in Signpost, but that a separate insert in Signpost was discounted as impractical.

#### **1718-54 Traffic calming**

Cllrs Adams and Briden reported that the overgrown hedges reported in the previous meeting have been dealt with, however Cllr Briden stated that the tree at the Toll house, Exebridge has grown and is causing a blind spot from the junction making it very unsafe. While it was acknowledged this is a private residence and the Council can't insist the tree is removed, it may need to be reported to Highways as a hazard.

The Clerk read out an update from Cllr Hatton stating that despite reminders to Highways, there is no new information on the actions points from previous meetings regarding speeding.

**Action:** Cllr Adams to contact the owner of the Toll House regarding the overgrown tree.

#### **1718-55 Footpaths**

Cllr Adams reported that DCC have supplied a new gate and posts to replace the damaged ones in Timewell Hill and also that a new post has been received for the Keynes to Loyton path. Loyton Bridge awaits inspection.

**Actions:**

- Cllr Adams to install replacement gate and posts.
- Clerk to send DCC's 3P workshop invite to Carla Dawes

### 1718-56 Environment / Amenities

- a. Hedge trimming: Cllr Adams reported that the hedge trimming in the play area has been done. There was concern raised about the resulting bonfire, but Cllr Adams said residents were informed beforehand.
- b. Bus shelters: It was **RESOLVED** that works for the preserving treatment for the bus shelters not exceeding £100 be approved.  
**Action:** Cllr Adams to obtain estimates for the materials and labour.
- c. Car park weed treatment: Cllr Adams reported 3 treatments had been carried out. Cllr Andrew queried if this was an ongoing contract and it was agreed that it was.
- d. General update: Cllr Briden reported that there had been no works started on the Brushford PC's shed for sandbags in Exebridge. He also reported that applications for flood defence grants should be made directly to DCC, and that one resident has made an application.

### 1718-57 Grants to local organisations

Cllr Wescott stated two requests for grants had been received: from the Church for grass cutting, and from the Village Hall for repairs.

Cllr Andrew raised a concern that the Council had approved a grants policy in July which stipulated certain information be produced before an application would be considered by the Council, and that the policy wasn't being followed. He suggested all local groups be given a copy of the policy so they are aware of the new process. It was also pointed out that there was only £2000 in the reserve to fund grants.

Mr Manfred Krombas from the Church provided verbal information on the grant request of £500, and there followed considerable debate, in particular whether the Council was becoming obligated to works in the long term, the implications of not providing funding, and whether the Church as whole should financially support their local churches. It was **AGREED** that the Church be requested to submit a written application covering the points in the Council's policy for consideration at the next meeting.

Cllr Conway, in his role as chair of the Village Hall, spoke to their application for £2000 for essential repairs costing £6000 in total, stating that they are also applying for TAP and Locality Funding. It was **RESOLVED** to award grant funding to the Village Hall in principle, but that the amount of grant be deferred until the next meeting.

Cllr Wescott stated that any grant is awarded for one year only and there should be no assumption or obligation toward future grants, that that annual applications would be considered against Council resources at the time.

#### **Actions:**

- Clerk to provide local groups with copy of the Council grants awarding policy
- Clerk to liaise with Cllr Hatton on the budget and reserves position with regard to these requests.

### 1718-58 Request from Riverside Hall for support for their TAP fund application

The Council **RESOLVED** to support the application, but with no financial commitment.

**Action:** Clerk to contact with the Riverside Hall

### 1718-59 Report of the District Councillor

Cllr Moore reported:

- The MDDC planning team have full staffing and were catching up on any backlogs
- The Exe Valley gym and car park extension will be delayed until mid-January.
- Works on the new junction on the A361 has started, with a completion date of Summer 2018.
- MDDC will be holding a "State of the District" debate on leasing.
- The Local Plan approval has been deferred pending MDDC providing a further report to the Planning Inspectors on the sustainability of the J27 development. This will inevitably delay the adoption of the Local Plan.

### 1718-60 Consideration of a defibrillator / medical pack for Morebath Village

Cllr Wescott welcomed Mr John Gregory to the meeting and Mr Gregory briefly explained the use, benefits, operation and financial costs of a defibrillator unit and cabinet. Mr Gregory also stated that for maximum benefit, as many people as possible should be trained to use it.

It was noted the defibrillator would cost £800 -£1200, a heated cabinet approx. £400, replacement pads/ batteries £99 every two years, electricity costs estimated £8 per year. It was also noted the unit need to be replaced every eight years so setting aside £150 per year is recommended. Training typically costs approx. £85 per person, but discounts may be available.

The Council raised questions on types of cabinet – whether they should be lockable and/or alarmed, and whether it should be heated, and whether there should be a nominated person responsible for checking its working condition. Council also considered where a defibrillator could be best located, not in direct sunlight. After further discussion it was **RESOLVED** that, in principle, the Council will obtain a defibrillator and cabinet, subject to:

- sources of grant or community funding be investigated
- consideration of the budget implications at the next meeting
- obtaining quotes for the unit, cabinet and training
- confirming the most appropriate location for siting the unit.

#### Actions:

- Clerk to obtain estimates for the defibrillator and cabinet, consult with Cllr Hatton on the budget implications for the next meeting, investigate insurance implications and submit an application to the Locality Fund.
- Cllr Conway to confirm a suitable place to site the unit.

### 1718-61 Planning

The following items were **NOTED**:

- 17/01062/ARM: Reserved Matters (parking) for the erection of a holiday let/ workshop/ therapy room following Outline approval 16/00442/OUT, Whitehall Farm Morebath
- 17/01248/LBC: Listed Building Consent for installation of replacement front and side doors and blocking up of unused side door Location: Higher Trickeys Cottage Morebath Tiverton- approved by MDDC

The Clerk also reported:

- Exmoor National Park are consulting on their Partnership Plan 2018-22 and there will be a briefing session in Dulverton on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017.
- Notification from MDDC on the postponement of the Planning Inspector hearings on the Local Plan as referred to by Cllr Moore.
- Devon County Council consultation on a Supplementary Planning Document on Mineral Safeguarding Areas, deadline 16<sup>th</sup> October.

#### 1718-62 Risk Management

Cllr Conway reported DCC are to clean, replace lamps and provide a certificate for the lights in the car park for minimal cost. DCC recommend this be carried out every 6 years.

#### 1718-63 Purchase of IT equipment

The Clerk reported that a laptop, scanner/printer, Office licence and antivirus software had been purchased. The cost to be met from the £650 Transparency Code grant. Cllr Wescott suggested obtaining a second memory stick for back-up.

#### 1718-64 Council Policies

The Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the following policies as set out in the agenda

- Equalities Policy
- Data Protection and Document Retention Policy

#### 1718-65 Amendment to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations regarding contracts

It was **RESOLVED** to amend the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations so that awarding of contracts will be subject to:

- Under £100 – no specific rules
- Over £100 to £3000 – three estimates to be obtained where possible
- Over £3000 – three or more quotes to be received
- Over £25000 – tendering to take place in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015

**Action:** Clerk to update Standing Orders and Financial Regulations accordingly and publish on the website.

#### 1718-66 Finance 2017/18

- a. The Clerk reported the current financial position as set out in the agenda. It was reported that the Council has received the HMRC VAT refund for Halberton Parish Council in error and the Clerk had written to HMRC. The reserves position was currently £21,971 of which £7304 was for general reserves but this will reduce as the year progresses. The draft 2018/19 budget and a review of reserves will be presented at the next meeting.
- b. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Alison Marshall as internal auditor for 3 years.
- c. Council **RESOLVED** to approve the following payments:
  - Payment to Halberton Parish Council for VAT refund received in error £702.33
  - K Ward / HMRC wages £173.62
  - K Ward expenses £12.31
  - K Ward reimburse for IT equipment £484.97 (£404.14 + VAT)
  - Information Commissioners Office registration £35.00
  - J Briden reimbursement for A Good Councillors Guide 2017 £4.45

#### 1718-67 Other item to note only

The Clerk reported the MDDC Chairman will be attending in March 2018. There is a Devon Association of Local Council's AGM on 10<sup>th</sup> October, cost £25 each. MDDC are offering free Code of Conduct training on 30<sup>th</sup> October in Tiverton.

Cllr Briden raised concerns about MDDC's grass cutting with reference to what the Council has agreed to pay for.

**Action:** Clerk to contact MDDC to obtain confirmation of grass cutting dates.

Next meeting: **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017, 7.30pm, Morebath Village Hall**

Meeting closed 10.24pm

**Signed as a correct record:**

**Date:**

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